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Yuichi Hosoda

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EXAMINER

GHEE, ASHANTI

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

2626

DATE MAILED: 06/24/2004

5

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/662,134

Applicant(s)

HOSODA ET AL.

Examiner

Ashanti Ghee

Art Unit

2626

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-51 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☒ Claim(s) 24-33 is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-13, 16-23 and 34-51 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 14 and 15 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☒ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 14 September 2000 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- 1) ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - 2) ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
 - 3) ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date ____.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: ____.

DETAILED ACTION

Specification

1. The abstract of the disclosure is objected to because it is too long. Correction is required. See MPEP § 608.01(b).

Drawings

2. Figure 37-39 should be designated by a legend such as --Prior Art-- because only that which is old is illustrated. See MPEP § 608.02(g). Corrected drawing sheets are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. The replacement sheet(s) should be labeled "Replacement Sheet" in the page header (as per 37 CFR 1.84(c)) so as not to obstruct any portion of the drawing figures. If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Art Unit: 2626

4. Claims 1-9, 18-19, and 21-22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mori et al. (US Patent No. 6,292,267) in view of Kato (US Patent No. 6,141,111).

Regarding claims 1, 18, and 21, Mori discloses a data processing apparatus that can transmit a printing job to an image recording apparatus having a plurality of sheet discharge ports or an image recording apparatus to which an optional device having a plurality of sheet discharge ports can be connected comprising: registering means (mailbox manager 52a) for instructing (informing in the context of this reference reads on instructing) said image recording apparatus (printer apparatus) to register (registering) a discrimination name (user name reads on discrimination name) for each (each) of said sheet discharge ports (bins) respectively (col. 31, lines 19-col. 32, lines 1-48); obtaining means (mailbox controller 20a) for requesting (collects in the context of this reference reads on requesting) to obtain a discrimination name (user name) of each sheet discharge port (bin) registered (registered) in said image recording apparatus (printer apparatus) from said image recording apparatus (printer apparatus; col. 34, lines 1-28); designating means (mailbox controller 20a) for displaying (displaying) the discrimination name (user name) obtained (collected) by said obtaining means (20a), designating (designated) to select (deciding, see col. 33, lines 25-27) a plurality of sheet discharge addresses (bin number) from the displayed (displaying) discrimination name (user name) respectively by a predetermined unit of printing data (requested printing reads on predetermined unit of printing data; col. 32, lines 47-col. 34, lines 1-28).

Although Mori does not disclose designating the number of copies for each discharge address and a preparing means, Kato discloses at the same time, designating (enters) the number of sheet discharge copies (number of required copies) for each sheet discharge address (user ID) designated (enters) by said predetermined unit of printing data (extra-copy designation sheet 300; col. 8, lines 32-38); and preparing means (CPU 1) for preparing (produces) a printing job (printing...image data) by including each designation of the plurality of sheet discharge addresses (user ID input portion reads on including each designation of the plurality of sheet discharge addresses) by said predetermined unit of printing data (Fig. 8, element 301) by said designating means (operator reads on designating means) and each designation (enters reads on a designation) of the number of sheet discharge copies (number of required copies) of each sheet discharge address (user ID input portion) to be designated (enters) by said predetermined unit of printing data all in one printing job (300 reads on predetermined unit of printing data all in one printing job; 8, lines 8-55).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine the teachings of Mori and Kato due to both references disclosing a printing system containing a sorter with bins to sort and output printed images on paper to provide an image printing method capable of performing a prescribed editing process and printing rapidly and easily by simple operations requiring no special knowledge.

Regarding claim 2, Mori discloses a data processing apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein said registering means (52a) is for instructing (informing) said image

Art Unit: 2626

recording apparatus (printer apparatus) to register (registering) a discrimination name (group name) for each (each) of said sheet discharge ports (bins) and the number of members (user name) belonging to the discrimination name (group name) respectively (col. 31, lines 19-col. 32, lines 1-48), said obtaining means (20a) is for obtaining (collects) a discrimination name (group name) registered (registered) in each sheet discharge port (bin) of said image recording apparatus (printer apparatus) and the number of members (user name) belonging to the discrimination name (group name) from said image recording apparatus (printer; col. 32, lines 47-col. 33, lines 1-28), and said designating means is for designating the number of members belonging to the discrimination name of the sheet discharge port obtained by said obtaining means (col. 31, lines 66-col. 32, lines 1-4 and col. 32, lines 63-col. 33, lines 1-12) or an arbitrary number of copies in the number of sheet discharge copies of each sheet discharge address designated to be selected by said predetermined unit of printing data.

Regarding claim 3, Mori does not specifically disclose storing means for storing a plurality of character strings as discrimination names, wherein said registering means registers an inputted character string or a character string selected from the plurality of character strings stored in said storing means as a discrimination name of a sheet discharge port in said image recording apparatus.

However, Kato discloses a data processing apparatus according to Claim 1, further comprising storing means for storing a plurality of character strings as discrimination names, wherein said registering means registers an inputted character string or a character string selected from the plurality of character strings stored in said

storing means as a discrimination name of a sheet discharge port in said image recording apparatus (col. 4, lines 20-35).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine the teachings of Mori and Kato due to both references disclosing a printing system containing a sorter with bins to sort and output printed images on paper to provide an image printing method capable of performing a prescribed editing process and printing rapidly and easily by simple operations requiring no special knowledge.

Regarding claim 4, Mori discloses a data processing apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein said predetermined unit of printing data includes a page unit of printing data (col. 35, lines 39-53).

Regarding claim 5, Mori discloses a data processing apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein said printing data includes a plurality of printing data prepared by identical or different applications (col. 9, lines 38-57).

Regarding claim 6, Mori discloses A data processing apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein reporting means for reporting information of a sheet discharge port to which a printing job is outputted that is notified at the time of finishing processing of the printing job from said image recording apparatus (col. 27, lines 53-59).

Regarding claims 7, 19, and 22, Mori discloses a data processing apparatus that can transmit printing data to an image recording apparatus having a plurality of sheet discharge ports comprising: obtaining means (mailbox controller 20a) for obtaining (collects) a discrimination name (group name) registered (registered, col. 33, lines 1-4)

Art Unit: 2626

in each sheet discharge port (bin) of said image recording apparatus (network printing apparatus, col. 33, lines 4-20); designating means (20a) for displaying (displaying) the discrimination name (user name) obtained (collected) by said obtaining means (20a), designating (designated) to select (deciding, col. 33, lines 25-27) a plurality of sheet discharge addresses (user name) from the displayed (displaying) discrimination name (user name) respectively by a predetermined unit of printing data (requested printing reads on predetermined unit of printing data; col. 32, lines 47-67 and col. 34, lines 1-28).

Although Mori does not specifically disclose designating the number of copies for each discharge address and a preparing means, Kato discloses at the same time, designating (enters) the number of sheet discharge copies (number of required copies) for each sheet discharge address (user ID) designated (enters) by said predetermined unit of printing data (extra-copy designation sheet 300; col. 8, lines 32-38); and preparing means (CPU 1) for preparing (produces) a printing job (printing...image data) by including each designation of the plurality of sheet discharge addresses (user ID input portion reads on including each designation of the plurality of sheet discharge addresses) by said predetermined unit of printing data (Fig. 8, element 301) by said designating means (operator reads on designating means) and each designation (enters reads on a designation) of the number of sheet discharge copies (number of required copies) of each sheet discharge address (user ID input portion) to be designated (enters) by said predetermined unit of printing data all in one printing job (300 reads on predetermined unit of printing data all in one printing job; 8, lines 8-55).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine the teachings of Mori and Kato due to both references disclosing a printing system containing a sorter with bins to sort and output printed images on paper to provide an image printing method capable of performing a prescribed editing process and printing rapidly and easily by simple operations requiring no special knowledge.

Regarding claim 8, Mori discloses a data processing apparatus according to Claim 7, wherein said obtaining means is for obtaining a discrimination name registered in each sheet discharge port of said image recording apparatus and the number of members belonging to the discrimination name from said image recording apparatus (col. 32, lines 63-col. 33, lines 1-12), and said designating means is for designating the number of members belonging to the discrimination name of the sheet discharge port obtained by said obtaining means (col. 31, lines 66-col. 32, lines 1-4 and col. 32, lines 63-col. 33, lines 1-12) or an arbitrary number of copies in the number of sheet discharge copies of each sheet discharge address designated to be selected by said predetermined unit of printing data.

Regarding claim 9, Mori discloses a data processing apparatus according to Claim 8, wherein said discrimination name is information for representing an owner using the sheet discharge port including a user name, a group name and a department name (col. 31, lines 66-col. 32, lines 1-4).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

5. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

6. Claims 10-13, 17, 20, 23, and 34-47 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Mori et al. (US Patent No. 6,292,267).

Regarding claims 10, 20, and 23, Mori discloses an image recording apparatus that can discharge a printing result of a printing job received from a data processing apparatus to a plurality of sheet discharge port comprising: registering means (mailbox manager 52a...for registering) for registering a discrimination name (user name) of each of said sheet discharge port (a bin reads on each of said sheet discharge port) that is instructed (designating in the context of this reference reads on instructed) to be registered (registered) by said data processing apparatus (client 52, col. 31, lines 20-26); first notifying means (mailbox controller 20a) for notifying (outputs required information) said data processing apparatus (52) of the discrimination name (user name, col. 34, lines 6-8) of each of said sheet discharge port (paper bin information, col. 34, lines 6-8) registered (registered, col. 32, lines 63-66) by said registering means (52a) in accordance with a request (request) from said data processing apparatus (52; col. 34, lines 48-59); preparing means (mailbox management information file MBF) for

preparing (stores) page information (total number of sheets) for a plurality of discrimination names (user name (group names)) of a predetermined unit of printing data (job name/job number) included in one printing job by said predetermined unit of printing data (job name/job number) based on the notification (outputs required information, col. 34, lines 48-59) of said first notifying means (20a; col. 34, lines 31-42); retrieving means (20a) for retrieving (manage reads on retrieving) a sheet discharge port (bin) to which a discrimination name (name of the user) identical with a plurality of discrimination names (list of bin allotted information) of a predetermined unit of printing data (job name/job number) included in said one printing job (job name/job number; col. 34, lines 31-59 and col. 40, lines 8-21); and controlling means (center routine controller 21-10) for instructing (designates) the discharge of the number of sheet discharge copies (number of printable sheets) for each sheet discharge port (designated bin, col. 30, lines 12-18) retrieved by said retrieving means (20a; col. 25, lines 42-57) and each sheet discharge address (user name) designated (designated) by said predetermined unit of printing data (job name/job number) with respect to each piece of page information (required information reads on each piece of page information) prepared by said preparing means (20a; col. 34, lines 31-59).

Regarding claim 11, Mori discloses an image recording apparatus according to Claim 10, wherein said registering means is for registering a discrimination name of each of said sheet discharge ports instructed to be registered by said data processing apparatus and the number of members belonging to the discrimination name (col. 31, lines 19-col. 32, lines 1-48), and said first notifying means is for notifying said data

processing apparatus of the discrimination name for each of said sheet discharge ports registered by said registering means (col. 34, lines 48-59) and the number of members (list of accommodation ratio reads on number of members) belonging to the discrimination name in accordance with a request from said data processing apparatus (col. 40, lines 1-15).

Regarding claim 12, Mori discloses an image recording apparatus according to Claim 10, wherein said predetermined unit of printing data includes a page unit of printing data (col. 35, lines 39-53).

Regarding claim 13, Mori discloses an image recording apparatus according to Claim 10, wherein said printing data includes a plurality of printing data prepared by identical or different applications (col. 9, lines 38-57).

Regarding claim 17, Mori discloses an image recording apparatus according to Claim 10, wherein said discrimination name is information for representing an owner using the sheet discharge port including a user name, a group name and a department name (col. 31, lines 66-col. 32, lines 1-4).

Regarding claims 34, 48, and 49, Mori discloses an image recording apparatus that can be connected to an optional apparatus having a plurality of storing units and can receive a printing job from a remote data processing apparatus, wherein said data processing apparatus output a first data including an instruction to cause said image recording apparatus to distribute printing data to said plurality of storing units by a distribution method in accordance with an instruction from a user inputted based on management information including information indicating a discrimination name of each

storing unit of said plurality of storing units managed by the storage apparatus, and further comprising: receiving means (LAN interface driver 21b) for receiving (received) said first data (printing data) outputted (supplied) from said data processing apparatus (client 52; col. 6, lines 53-59); and controlling means (mailbox controller 20a) for controlling (controlling) to distribute the printing data (designating a bin in which discharged paper is to be stored) received from said data processing apparatus (52) corresponding to said first data (printing data) to a storing unit (mailbox 51) based on said first data (printing data) received by said receiving means (21b) by a distribution method based on said first data (printing data; col. 31, lines 27-36).

Regarding claim 35, Mori discloses An image recording apparatus according to Claim 34, further comprising: receiving means for receiving second data for requesting said management information stored in said storage apparatus to be outputted from said data processing apparatus (col. 34, lines 48-59); and transmitting means for reading out said management information from said storage apparatus in response to the reception of said second data by said receiving means and transmitting the information to said data processing apparatus having outputted said second data (col. 23, lines 42-65).

Regarding claim 36, Mori discloses an image recording apparatus according to Claim 34, further comprising: notifying means for notifying of a user outputting said printing data and a user corresponding to a distribution object storing unit that the distribution of said printing data to said storing unit has been finished in accordance with the end of the distribution (col. 27, lines 3-23).

Regarding claims 37, 50, and 51, Mori discloses an image recording apparatus that can be connected to an optional apparatus having a plurality of storing units and can receive a printing job from a remote data processing apparatus comprising: receiving means (hard disk 24) for receiving (received) first data (printing data) including an instruction (printing job-header) for designating a distribution method of printing data to said plurality of storing units (the name of the designated paper feeder hopper reads on designating a distribution method of printing data to said plurality of storing units) outputted (supplied, col. 7, lines 5-17) from said data processing apparatus (client 52 see col. 7, lines 5-17; col. 16, lines 10-20); and controlling means (spooling controller 21-8) for confirming (queuing) the contents (spool information) of said first data (printing job) received (received) by said receiving means (24; col. 16, lines 10-47) and causing to execute (printing) the distribution of printed data by a unit designated by a user (designating a bin in which discharged paper is to be stored reads on to execute the distribution of printed data by a unit designated by a user) of said data processing apparatus (client 52) to respective distribution object storing units (mailbox 51) based on the contents (spool information) of said first data (printing data; col. 31, lines 27-51 and col. 16, lines 10-47).

Regarding claim 38, Mori discloses an image recording apparatus according to Claim 37, wherein said controlling means causes to execute the distribution of printing data by one page unit to respective distribution object storing units based on the contents of said first data (col. 16, lines 10-20).

Regarding claim 39, Mori discloses an image recording apparatus according to Claim 38, wherein said controlling means causes to execute the distribution of printing data of different pages to each distribution object storing unit respectively based on the contents of said first data (col. 16, lines 10-20).

Regarding claim 40, Mori discloses an image recording apparatus according to Claim 37, wherein said controlling means causes to distribute printing data by one file unit to each of the distribution object storing units based on the contents of said first data (col. 16, lines 10-20).

Regarding claim 41, Mori discloses an image recording apparatus according to Claim 40, wherein, if a plurality of files are included in printing data for one job to be received corresponding to said first data (col. 43, lines 50-62), said controlling means causes to execute the distribution of printing data of different files to each distribution object storing unit respectively based on the contents of said first data (col. 16, lines 10-20).

Regarding claim 42, Mori discloses an image recording apparatus according to Claim 37, wherein, if a plurality of files are included in printing data for one job to be received corresponding to said first data (col. 43, lines 50-62), said controlling means causes to execute the distribution of printing data by one job unit to each distribution object storing unit based on the contents of said first data (col. 16, lines 10-20).

Regarding claim 43, Mori discloses an image recording apparatus according to Claim 42, wherein said plurality of files are files prepared by different sorts of application software respectively (col. 9, lines 38-57).

Regarding claim 44, Mori discloses an image recording apparatus according to Claim 37, wherein said controlling means causes to execute the distribution of printing data to distribution object storing units by distinguishing a plurality of distribution methods (col. 16, lines 10-20), including a first distribution method for distributing printing data by one page unit to each distribution object storing unit and a second distribution method for distributing printing data by one file unit to each distribution object storing unit, each other based on said first data (col. 43, lines 50-62).

Regarding claim 45, Mori discloses an image recording apparatus according to Claim 37, wherein said controlling means causes to execute the distribution of printing data to distribution object storing units by distinguishing a plurality of distribution methods (col. 16, lines 10-20), including a first distribution method for distributing printing data by one page unit to each distribution object storing unit (col. 43, lines 50-62), a second distribution method for distributing printing data by one file unit to each distribution object storing unit and a third distribution method for distributing printing data for one job including a plurality of files by one job unit, each other based on said first data(col. 43, lines 50-62).

Regarding claim 46, Mori discloses an image recording apparatus according to Claim 37, wherein said instruction included in said first data is based on management information including information indicating a discrimination name for each storing unit of said plurality of storing units (col. 31, lines 52-col. 32, lines 1-4), further comprising: storing means for storing said management information (col. 31, lines 45-51); receiving means for receiving a second data for requesting said management information

outputted from said data processing apparatus (col. 31, lines 27-51 and col. 16, lines 10-47); and transmitting means for transmitting said management information to said data processing apparatus outputting said second data in response to the reception of said second data by said receiving means (col. 31, lines 27-51 and col. 16, lines 10-47).

Regarding claim 47, Mori discloses an image recording apparatus according to Claim 37, further comprising notifying means for notifying a user outputting said printing data and a user corresponding to a distribution object storing unit that the distribution of said printing data to said storing unit has been finished in accordance with the end of the distribution (col. 26, lines 39-48 and col. 30, lines 57-67).

7. Claim 16 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mori et al. (US Patent No. 6,292,267) in view of Kimura et al. (US Patent No. 5,265,855).

Regarding claim 16, Mori discloses an image recording apparatus according to Claim 10, wherein a plurality of sheet discharge port provided in an optional apparatus to be connected to an image recording apparatus main body (col. 6, lines 31-39).

Although Mori does not specifically disclose said plurality of sheet discharge ports include a plurality of sheet discharge ports provided in an image recording apparatus main body, Kimura discloses said plurality of sheet discharge ports include a plurality of sheet discharge ports provided in an image recording apparatus main body (col. 7, lines 41-53).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine the teachings of Mori and Kimura due to

both references disclosing a printing system containing a sorter with bins to sort and output printed images on paper to provide a document feeder for image forming equipment which is simple in construction and insures high productivity and reliability.

Allowable Subject Matter

8. Claims 14 and 15 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.
9. Claims 24-33 are allowable over the prior art of record.
10. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance: Claims 24-33 are allowable over the prior art of record because the Examiner found neither prior art cited in its entirety, nor based on the prior art, found any motivation to combine any of the said prior art which teaches a data processing apparatus, method, and computer-readable medium that contains a first transmitting means for transmitting first data for requesting management information, an obtaining means for obtaining management information, display controller means for displaying a screen based on the management information, and a second transmitting means for transmitting second data that includes an instruction to distribute printing data, respectively, as set forth in Claims 24, 32, and 33 including all of the features recited therein.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably

accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Conclusion

11. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

Tomory (US Patent No. 5,815,764) discloses a document job routing system that includes a controller providing a set of information.

Hiroi et al. (US Patent No. 5,255,908) discloses a sheet sorter with control for continuous operation.

Horikawa et al. (US Patent No. 5,971,383) discloses a finisher with a large-capacity sheet stack section.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Ashanti Ghee whose telephone number is (703) 306-3443. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon-Thurs and alt. Fri. (7-4PM).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Kimberly A. Williams can be reached on (703) 305-4863. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



AG
June 15, 2004

Ashanti Ghee
Examiner
Art Unit 2626

MARK WALLERSON
PRIMARY EXAMINER

